

# THE GULL

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

CALIFORNIA  
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

MAR 7 2006

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## Wetland Restoration Revives Endangered Native Plant

**T**hanks to a collaborative effort that includes the Port of San Francisco and Hanson Aggregates, Golden Gate Audubon is leading a wetland enhancement at San Francisco's Pier 94. Several years in the making, this unusual project was developed not only to create and enhance existing intertidal wetlands, but also to colonize a federally endangered plant, California Sea-blite (*Suaeda californica*). In early 2006, 2,000 cubic yards of sand, gravel, and shell were placed at the site, as well as the founder sea-blite plants. With a lot of maintenance and a little luck, this project could prove to be one of our most successful yet.

The port established Pier 94 in the 1970s on San Francisco's southeastern waterfront. As the fill material on several adjacent acres of isolated industrial lands gradually began to subside, a native salt marsh revealed itself. The spontaneous for-



Anne McTavish

Volunteers on a work day at Pier 94.

mation of four acres of salt marsh became subject to tidal inundation, and suddenly this rubble-fill shoreline presented a perfect opportunity for regenerating rare and valuable habitat in this highly industrialized portion of the bay.

High-tidal salt marsh habitat is extremely rare in modern San Francisco Bay and nearly nonexistent in San Francisco itself. Yet intertidal wetlands provide necessary spawning and nursery habitat for many fish and invertebrates, as well as foraging and roosting habitat for a wide variety of bird species. Already one can observe species such as Brown Pelicans, Merlins, Long-billed Dowitchers, and Greater Yellowlegs

WETLAND continued on page 12

## Challenging Day for Oakland CBC

**A**ny count that begins with driving rain that scuttles predawn owling—and continues with early-morning marine conditions too severe for boats to venture out—is off to a shaky start. Still, at daylight on December 18, 160 hardy birders took to the field, where they persisted through intermittent rain totaling nearly three inches in 24 hours, and dense fog that blanketed the East Bay hills. At the countdown dinner, 80 birders, warm and dry at last, gathered to enjoy hospitality chair Susanne Shields's wonderful dinner. They reported many good birds, and after dinner two of them even went out and found two owl species missed earlier in the day. So, in the end, the 65th Oakland Christmas Bird Count definitely qualified as a success.

With no boats on the bay, numbers of scoters, loons, and some grebes were way down. On land, the challenging weather pushed numbers of Western Scrub-Jay, Bushtit, Bewick's Wren and Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Wrentit, California Thrasher, and Purple Finch and House Finch numbers to their lowest levels recorded since 1974. Complete misses included Golden Eagle and Northern Saw-whet Owl (each missed only twice since 1974), Ruddy Turnstone (in decline along much of the Pacific Coast), and Red Knot (formerly regular, but erratic since 1992). We tallied slightly fewer than 83,000 individual birds, about 15 percent below our

OAKLAND CBC continued on page 4



INSIDE

- 2 GGA Welcomes New Staff Member
- 4 San Francisco CBC
- 10 New GGA Classes

## ROSTER

### ELECTED DIRECTORS

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The Golden Gate Audubon Society was founded January 15, 1917, and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948. Golden Gate Audubon Society Supporting Membership is \$25 per year. Renewals should be sent to the Golden Gate Audubon office. The board of directors meets the last Monday of every month (except August and December) at 7:30 p.m. in the chapter office in Berkeley.

The Gull is published nine times per year by the Golden Gate Audubon Society. The deadline for submissions is five weeks prior to the month of publication. Special third-class postage paid in Oakland, CA. Send address changes to office promptly. The post office does not forward The Gull.

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Design and layout e.g. communications

# GGA Hires Volunteer and Membership Coordinator

**M**et Jacob Winiecki, Golden Gate Audubon's newest staff member. As GGA's first fulltime volunteer and membership development coordinator, he is working with volunteers to coordinate their activities and is overseeing efforts to expand our chapter's membership. Jacob comes to GGA from New York City, where he consulted with environmental groups, including the New York City Department of Environmental Protection, the New York League of Conservation Voters, and the Natural Resources Defense Council. At the same time, he earned his masters of public administration in environmental science and policy from Columbia University. Previously, Jacob worked as controller and outreach coordinator for WildAid, where he helped build a volunteer program and increase WildAid's membership significantly in the Bay Area. In 2004, Jacob was selected as one of 20 Emerging Wildlife Conservation Leaders by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Defenders of Wildlife. Jacob shared his thoughts about joining GGA with board president, Marjorie Blackwell.



Jacob Winiecki.

Tara Zuardo

**MB** What drew you to Golden Gate Audubon?

**JW** I have spent the last few years working on local environmental issues, particularly in an urban setting. For me, it is very rewarding to work on issues that affect my own community, and I appreciate being able to see solid results right in my backyard. I love the Bay Area and can't think of another organization doing more for wildlife in our community.

**MB** Why do you want to work with volunteers and members?

**JW** Most nongovernment organizations rely heavily on membership dues and volunteer participation, but lack the capacity to fully engage their stakeholders. I see this as an opportunity not only to help GGA build a larger membership and volunteer program, but also to improve and enrich each person's conservation experience.

**MB** What particularly in your experience is relevant to your new job?

**JW** I spent two years developing and managing an outreach program at WildAid in San Francisco and a year managing membership for the San Francisco Vegetarian Society. Most recently, I was very involved in political strategizing and coalition building for various conservation activities with the New York League of Conservation Voters.

**MB** What are your immediate plans for launching this new position in GGA?

**JW** I am designing a survey that will help us better understand who our members are, why they are interested in GGA, what they enjoy, and how they would like to get more involved. We will also be initiating regular volunteer orientation events, so people who want to volunteer can easily learn about how they can get involved with our programs. I also am participating in many conservation activities, to "get my hands dirty" right off the bat, and meet our wonderful volunteers face to face.

**MB** Welcome to Golden Gate Audubon, Jacob!

## Don't Forget to Renew Your Supporting Membership!

Supporting Members are crucial to ensuring the effectiveness of all our conservation, education, and birding programs and activities. By renewing now, your 2006 Supporting Membership will be matched by a generous grant from the Dean Witter Foundation! Supporting Members enjoy special benefits, such as discounts or priority registration for GGA classes, programs, and other events, such as the field trip to Alcatraz Island (page 5). Renew today by mail or at [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org).



# How One Longtime Member Plans Future Support to GGA

**G**olden Gate Audubon is pleased to salute Richard Bachenheimer, one of our longest-term members and volunteers—and one of our most generous supporters.

Richard has been a GGA member for 30 years and over the past three decades has contributed his time as a volunteer in the office, as well as provided substantial financial support to GGA. Now, in an effort to see that our organization's work to preserve and restore bird habitat continues, Richard has included Golden Gate Audubon in his will.

"I would support almost anything Golden Gate Audubon does," Richard says. Their goals are the same as mine, and I am in a position to help. I hope they can continue to carry out their mission."

Supporting GGA through estate planning, as Richard is doing, is an extremely effective way to help Golden Gate Audubon, notes Elizabeth Yates McNamee, board member and chair of the GGA development committee. "Even if members can't make large contributions right now, they can help GGA well into the future through their estate planning. They can consult their own attorneys about what will work best for their families and for GGA. And one of our longtime members, attorney Steve Margolin, can answer any questions they might have."

Why did Richard Bachenheimer decide to include Golden Gate Audubon in his will? His answer is simple. "I support organizations I like," he says. "I've always been a bird lover and am interested in protecting them. There has been so much growth in the Bay Area," he adds, "and bird habitat is disappearing." He recalls the large flocks of birds he used to see on the Emeryville crescent when he drove from Berkeley to San Francisco. Although he is now less active than he used to be, he still watches birds daily from his home on the edge of San Francisco Bay in south Richmond. "I open the window every day and see hundreds of birds floating on the bay."

A Bay Area resident for 65 years, Richard arrived as a disabled



Richard Bachenheimer, GGA member and supporter.

Elizabeth Murdoch

World War II veteran in 1940 to attend the University of California at Berkeley. He earned a bachelor degree in anthropology and studied for a PhD. He was awarded a Fulbright scholarship and spent two years in India. After returning to the Bay Area, he raised a family and pursued a successful career in commercial real estate, owning his own firm. Richard's family includes two daughters, a son, and a grandson and will soon expand with the addition of twin grandchildren.

Immoderately modest and shy about public acknowledgment of his generosity to Golden Gate Audubon, Richard says, "I'm just a quiet, dues-paying member." Well, Richard, Golden Gate Audubon thinks you are a lot more than that, and we are very grateful for your support.

by Marjorie Blackwell, President

## Leora Feeney Honored

**T**he 2006 Terwilliger Environmental Award was presented to Leora Feeney, Golden Gate Audubon board member and chair of the Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge Committee, at WildCare's sixth annual Nature Lover's Ball on January 21. The event was organized by WildCare, a nature education and wildlife rehabilitation organization, and sponsored by PG&E. Doug McConnell, host of the TV program *Bay Area Backroads*, was the

master of ceremonies.

The Terwilliger Environmental Award is given to a Bay Area environmental educator who, like nationally renowned Elizabeth Terwilliger, is committed to conservation and who shares her love for the natural world. Feeney has played a key role in connecting Alameda elementary school children to the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge and has coordinated numerous other opportunities for children

to learn about wildlife. A trained biologist, Feeney volunteers her time to protect the California Least Terns and other wildlife at the refuge by lobbying key public officials, as well as educating the community.

On March 16 in Berkeley, as part of GGA's Speaker Series, Leora will give a slide-lecture on the history and future of the refuge (see page 5).

by Tara Zuardo, Office Manager, and  
Kellie Geldreich, Intern

# Good Weather, Rare Birds on San Francisco CBC

**T**he 2005 San Francisco Christmas Bird Count was held on Thursday, December 29. The 90 observers in the field and 3 birders at feeders saw 170 species and 51,427 individual birds. Compared with past years, the species count was on the high side of what we expect, but the count of individual birds was on the low side of average.

The weather during the count was great: it didn't rain. We don't know of another Bay Area CBC day this year on which it didn't rain. Although the weather was comfortable all day, don't think it wasn't a factor. Sea watchers had a tough time with pounding surf and a zone of rough seas that seemed to pulverize water into a thick mist. Birds we expected just beyond the surf were well offshore, so our count for scoters, loons, and large grebes was quite low. Consistent with other reports, our count of scaup in the bay was low as well. On the other hand, our Bufflehead count was at an all-time high.

Maybe the biggest surprise for the count came from the wetlands around the SAMTRANS Depot on North Access Road just north of the airport, where we had high counts of 33 Clapper Rails and 29 Soras. All of the Clapper Rails and 22 of the Soras were in the recently restored wetlands. This is very significant, because it more than doubles our previous count for Clapper Rails.

We noted very low numbers of shorebirds, perhaps due to the high tide. Still, Western and Least Sandpipers, Dunlin, and the dowitchers all showed significantly low numbers. Storms and probably a crash in the food chain brought numerous Red Phalaropes on shore during the week around Christmas. We had a total of 537, with most of those seen on the flooded Sharps Park Golf Course.

We had high counts for Anna's Hummingbird, Black and Say's Phoebe, Pygmy Nuthatch, Bushtit, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Townsend's Warbler, California Towhee, and Fox Sparrow. This doesn't seem to indicate anything in terms of population trends. However, high counts for both American Crow (331) and Common



Eddie Bartley/Nature Trip

*Red Phalarope seen at Sutro Baths during the San Francisco CBC.*

Raven (393) suggest these species continue to increase their local populations. Not too many years ago ravens were considered an unusual species locally.

As always, the San Francisco CBC had its share of rare and unusual birds: one Harlequin Duck, five Blue-winged Teals, one Common Merganser, three Hooded Mergansers, three Red-necked Grebes, two Nuttall's Woodpeckers, five Nashville Warblers, one Hermit Warbler, one Palm Warbler, one Black-and-white Warbler, one Summer Tanager, two Swamp Sparrows, three Orchard Orioles, and one Bullock's Oriole.

We thank all who made the count another wonderful success: the area leaders, the birders who braved the only day in the count period without rain, and the feeder counters. Thanks, too, to our great staff, Elizabeth, Tara, and Michelle, at the GGA office, to Susan Shields and everyone who volunteered to provide an excellent dinner, and to Damian Raffa and everyone at the Presidio Trust for giving us access to the Log Cabin and cosponsoring the count.

The 2006 San Francisco Christmas Bird Count will be held Thursday, December 28.

**by Dan Murphy and Alan Hopkins, Compilers**

## OAKLAND CBC from page 1

average over the last 10 years, but comparable to other recent bad-weather years.

We found 175 species on count day, only two below our recent average, with many nice rarities among them. Best bird was a Black Rail, the first ever recorded on the count; it was flushed by a canoe at Arrowhead Marsh. A Palm Warbler was only the second found since 1974; another individual was present during count week but not located on count day. One of our 18 feeder watchers spotted an eastern ("Red") Fox Sparrow, only the third record.

Other unusual birds included Brant, Nashville Warbler, Lesser Yellowlegs, Black-and-white Warbler, Tufted Duck,



Joe Devine

*Palm Warbler seen in the Lake Merritt area during the week of the Oakland CBC.*

Wandering Tattler, white geese (probably Snow Geese) in flight, and a *selasphorus* hummingbird. A male hybrid "beautiful duck" was likely the same individual that wintered on Lake Merritt the last two years; it's considered to be a Hooded Merganser

x Barrow's Goldeneye. Two other hybrid ducks may also have had Hooded Merganser as a parent. White-throated Swift and Rock Wren (both usually found) were seen only during count week this year, as was a Pileated Woodpecker that has apparently been present since at least 2000, but has always eluded us on count day. Finally, as if to warm the heart of Benjamin Franklin on the tercentenary of his birth, Wild Turkeys continue to increase in the count circle, with 78 birds found this year.

With confidence that the next Oakland count will have much better weather, we invite you all to mark your calendar for Sunday, December 17, 2006. See you then!

**by Dave Quady and Bob Lewis, Compilers**





Talks in the Speaker Series begin at 7:30 p.m. At 7 p.m., healthful, delicious snacks are served by hospitality coordinator, Susanne Shields. Golden Gate Audubon welcomes new Speaker Series coordinators, Sarah Reed and Matteo Garbelotto, who are facilitating programs in Berkeley and San Francisco, respectively.

## Birds and Wildlife of Eastern Australia

Joe Morlan

Friday, March 10

San Francisco

Australia offers the traveling naturalist an unparalleled opportunity to witness the results of evolution on an isolated island continent. In August 2005, Joe Morlan and Robbie Fischer explored Eastern Australia. Joe will share their adventures in an entertaining and informative program illustrated with photographs of the region's unique wildlife: Flying Foxes in the Sydney Botanic Gardens, Brown Tree Snakes and Eastern Spinebills in the tropics of the Atherton Tablelands, Giant Clams in the Great Barrier Reef, and an intimate encounter with a Gibson's Albatross on the Tasman Sea. You'll learn about the acrobatic Willie Wagtail, the bizarre Blue-faced Honeyeater, the spectacular multicolored Noisy Pitta, the endemic Gray-headed Robin, and the ungainly Helmeted Friarbird. Joe is a longtime ornithology instructor at City College in San Francisco.

County Fair Building, San Francisco Botanical Garden at Strybing Arboretum, Golden Gate Park, Ninth Avenue at Lincoln Way.

Directions: [www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html](http://www.sfbotanicalgarden.org/visiting/page2.html)

## The Making of a Wildlife Refuge

Leora Feeney

Thursday, March 16

Berkeley

Leora Feeney will present a history of the western end of Alameda, beginning with the days before it was the site of a U.S. Navy air station and continuing through the current efforts to establish a national wildlife refuge on the former base. Collaborating with photographer Eleanor Briccetti, she will show images of the wildlife that depend on the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge, including the endangered California Least Terns that have nested there since the mid-1970s. Leora founded and still chairs Golden Gate Audubon's Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge Committee and has worked tirelessly to protect the birds and other wildlife at the refuge. She is the 2006 recipient of the Terwilliger Environmental Award (see page 3).

Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda (between Solano and Marin)  
Directions: [www.northbrae.org/directions.htm](http://www.northbrae.org/directions.htm)

## GGA Bilingual Family Trips

These monthly trips are conducted in both Spanish and English. People of all ages are invited to attend. Participants join students and teachers in GGA's Eco-Oakland Program. Students can earn community service hours for the trips. For information, contact Susan Groves, 510.654.5954, [groves.susan@gmail.com](mailto:groves.susan@gmail.com).

### Arrowhead Marsh

Oakland

Friday, March 3

Olga Rojas and Susan Groves

Meet at 3:30 p.m. in front of the look-out structure at Arrowhead Marsh. We'll restore critical salt marsh habitat for shorebirds and endangered Clapper Rails. We'll also check out the birds, so bring binoculars or use ours. Trip ends at 5:30 p.m.

Take I-880 to Hegenberger exit and go west on Hegenberger to Doolittle Dr. Turn right on Doolittle, then right onto Swan Way and left into MLK, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park. Drive to end for Arrowhead Marsh parking lot.

### Lion's Creek Canyon

Oakland

Friday, April 7

Mike Richter and Susan Groves

Meet at 3:30 p.m. in front of Merritt College bus stop. We'll restore bird habitat in the canyon of Lion's Creek. We'll also check out the birds, so bring binoculars or use ours. Trip ends at 5:30 p.m.

Take Warren Fwy. (Hwy. 13) south from Berkeley and exit at Redwood Rd. Go over overpass on Redwood Rd., heading east. Turn right on Campus Dr. and follow signs to Merritt College.

## Members-Only Trips to Alcatraz Island

Through July, National Park Service biologist Christian Hellwig is leading monthly field trips to Alcatraz Island. The two-hour trips, held on Thursdays and including a GGA coleader, are offered exclusively to GGA Supporting Members. Each is limited to the first 10 members who reserve a place. The next trips are scheduled for March 9 and April 13. To sign up, email name(s), contact information, and date of walk to Pamela Llewellyn, GGA coleader, at [seacreature219@sbcglobal.net](mailto:seacreature219@sbcglobal.net). She will confirm your reservation and send travel information. For further details, see the January/February Gull or go to [www.goldengateaudubon.org](http://www.goldengateaudubon.org).



# FIELD TRIPS

SUSAN GROVES, COORDINATOR

## Las Gallinas

Marin County

Thursdays, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

Bruce Bajema, 415.456.6271

Meet at parking lot for an 8:30–12:00 trip. GGA joins with Marin Auduboners on these Thursday trips. Expect visiting winter birds to be out in force. Heavy rain cancels. See March 19 trip for directions.

## East Shore State Park

Berkeley Waterfront

Friday, March 3

Bob Lewis

510.845.5001, rlewis0727@aol.com

Meet at 10 a.m. at corner of University and Frontage Rd. by Sea Breeze market. If the meadow is open, we'll check it out. Otherwise we'll cover some of coastal areas, looking for early arrivals from south and taking a last look at winter residents. Trip lasts about 2 hours. Rain cancels.

## Birding for Everyone

San Francisco Botanical Garden

Saturdays, March 4, April 1

Angie Geiger and Nancy DeStefanis, SF Nature Education; Darin Dawson, SF Botanical Garden Docent. 415.387.9160

Meet at 10 a.m. at front gate of garden. For details and directions, see January/February *Gull*. Cosponsored with Botanical Garden and SF Nature Education.

## San Francisco Botanical Garden

San Francisco

Sundays, March 5, April 2

Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna, 415.566.3241; Ginny Marshall, 650.349.3780

For this half-day trip, meet at 8 a.m. at front

gate of garden. For details, see January/February *Gull*.

## Coyote Hills

Alameda County

Saturday, March 11

Pamela Llewellyn, 925.413.8329, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at visitor center parking lot for this half-day trip looking for waterfowl, waders, songbirds, and an assortment of raptors. Bring liquids and sunscreen.

From East Bay, take I-880 south to 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Turn right and go west. Exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and continue north 1 mile, then turn left on Patterson Ranch Rd. to Coyote Hills. \$

## Orinda Connector Trail

Saturday, March 11

Denise Wight, 510.547.6822 (w), 925.377.0951 (h), blkittiwake@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. for this trip through oak woodland, planted pines, open grassland, and creekside vegetation, terminating at a small marsh at base of Briones Dam. We will look and listen for resident species and birds that have returned for the winter, then proceed to Briones Dam Overlook to scope reservoir for waterbirds. Trail can be muddy.

From Hwy. 24 in Orinda, head north on Camino Pablo to traffic light at Bear Creek Rd. Turn right onto Bear Creek, then left into small dirt parking lot at north-east corner.

## Wednesday at Arrowhead Marsh

Oakland

Sunday, March 12

Courtenay Peddle, 510.532.8911 (no calls before 9 a.m.), capeddle@there.net

Meet at Arrowhead Marsh parking lot at 9:30 a.m. For details and directions, see January/February *Gull*.

## Presidio Bird Walk

San Francisco

Sunday, March 12

David Armstrong, 415.584.6650, darmstrong99@yahoo.com (no calls after 9 p.m., email preferred)

For this 7-mile loop through diverse habitats of the Presidio, meet at 8 a.m. at parking lot at end of 15th Ave. (just north of intersection of 15th and Lake St.) Trip finishes around 1 p.m. Wear good walking shoes and bring a snack and water.

## Eastshore State Park

Albany

Monday, March 13

Michael Butler, 510.684.3375, mjbkl@earthlink.net

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at west end of Buchanan, next to racetrack. We will bird Albany Bulb and adjacent areas looking for waterbirds and land birds to add to new park's bird list.

Go west on Marin Ave. and cross San Pablo Ave., where Marin becomes Buchanan. Continue under freeway toward racetrack. Park in area at end of road.

## Corona Heights

San Francisco

Fridays, March 17, April 21

Charles Hibbard, Lewis Ellingham, Brian Fitch

Meet at 8 a.m. at Randall Museum. For details, see January/February *Gull*. Contact: Margaret Goodale, 415.554.9500, ext. 16, mgoodale@randallmuseum.org.

## San Francisco Bird Blitz

Saturday, March 18

Alan Hopkins 415.644.0983, ash@sfo.com

On this year's blitz, we expect to tally more than 100 species within city limits and look to exceed all previous records. Trip begins at 7 a.m. at north end of Van Ness Ave., at foot of Municipal Pier. We will caravan to other sites, including Golden Gate Park, Sutro Baths, Lake Merced, and Candlestick Point. Bring snacks, lunch and liquids. At dusk, we'll adjourn to a restaurant.

Contact Susan Groves, Field Trips Coordinator, at 510.654.5954 or groves.susan@gmail.com

- > if you can share a ride or if you need a ride
- > if you cannot reach a leader and need information
- > if you have suggestions for trips or want to lead a trip



Carpool



Entrance fee



Biking trip



## Lake Merritt

Oakland

**Saturday, March 18**

Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at large spherical cage near Nature Center. For details and directions, see the January/February *Gull*.

## Las Gallinas

Marin County

**Sunday, March 19**

Pamela Llewellyn, 510.843.7904, seacreature219@sbcglobal.net

Meet at 8:30 a.m. for this 3-hour trip. We'll see a variety of ducks, shorebirds, and raptors.

Take 101 north and exit at Lucas Valley D. Go east on Smith Ranch Rd. to county park. Take sharp left to sewage treatment ponds. Drive past headquarters to parking lot on left.

## Aquatic Park

San Francisco

**Sunday, March 19**

Carol Kiser, SF Maritime National Historical Park Ranger, 415.561.7100 or 561.7104

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at foot of Hyde Street Pier, at Hyde and Jefferson, for this 2-hour beginners' walk. Trip is wheelchair accessible.

## Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park

Oakland

**Wednesday, March 22**

Hilary Powers, 510.834.1066, hilary@powersedit.com; Ruth Tobey, 510.528.2093, ruthtobey@earthlink.net; Travis Hails, 510.451.1207 (no calls after 9 p.m.), travishails@yahoo.com

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at large spherical cage near Nature Center. For details and directions, see the January/February *Gull*.

## Tubbs Island/Tolay Creek

Sonoma County

**Saturday, March 25**

Bruce Bajema, 415.456.6271

Meet at 9 a.m. at Tolay Parking Lot on Hwy. 37. Join Marin Auduboners at this North Bay refuge, a place of amazing natural beauty being restored by Friends of San

## Bicycle Trips

Kathy Jarrett

510.547.1233 (call for cell number; no calls after 9 p.m.), Kathy\_Jarrett@yahoo.com  
Bicycle helmet required. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress in layers. Rain cancels.

**BART and Caltrain schedules:** [www.transitinfo.org](http://www.transitinfo.org)

### Quarry Lakes/Alameda Creek/Coyote Hills

Alameda County

**Saturday, March 18**

Meet at 7:55 a.m. outside turnstile at Union City BART Station or at 8:15 a.m. at Isherwood Staging area in Fremont. On creek, marsh, and bay, we have seen 50–60 species on previous trips. From BART, we will ride 2 mi. to Isherwood. We ride a total of about 22 mi., all on bike trails, with very little uphill. We will start with a loop of the ponds at Quarry Lakes, then bike along Alameda Creek Regional Trail to Coyote Hills, returning to BART/Isherwood in afternoon.

Take I-880 to Fremont and exit at Alvarado Blvd./Fremont Blvd. Go east on Fremont Blvd. and turn left onto Paseo Padre Pkwy. About .8 mi. after Paseo Padre crosses Decoto Rd., turn left onto Isherwood Way and cross bridge, then turn right into Isherwood Staging Area. If coming from peninsula via Dumbarton Bridge, continue east on Hwy 84, which becomes Decoto Rd., then turn right onto Paseo Padre.

### San Leandro to Hayward on SF Bay Trail

Alameda County

**Saturday, April 1**

Meet at 8 a.m. at San Leandro BART or at 8:30 a.m. at San Leandro Marina Park, last parking lot. Expect to see birds on bay, in marsh, in fields, and aloft. From BART, we will ride 3 miles to San Leandro Marina Park using bicycle lane on Williams St., just south of station. We will bicycle to Hayward Shoreline Regional Park, making a 20-mile round-trip excursion. First portion of trail is paved; remaining part is easily negotiable.

From I-880 in San Leandro, take Marina Blvd. exit (west) and in 1.4 mi turn left onto Monarch Bay Dr. Go to end to last parking lot at San Leandro Marina Park. We will assemble near restroom.

Pablo National Wildlife Refuge, a volunteer organization. Refuge should be alive with wintering birds.

From Hwy. 101 in Novato, go east on Hwy. 37. Continue for .25 mi. past second stoplight (turnoff to Sonoma Hwy. 121) and look for lot just past lagoon on right (south side of Hwy. 37). Heavy rain cancels.

### Pt. Reyes National Seashore

Marin County

**Sunday, March 26**

Rusty Scalf, 510.666.9936, rscalf@jps.net  
Meet at end of Limantour Rd. at 8 a.m. We'll leave some cars here, then fit ourselves into fewer cars for short drive to Muddy Hollow trailhead. We'll hike Muddy Hollow Rd. to Drake's Estero via Estero Trail and Sunset Beach Trail, then hike back to Limantour Beach. Cars left at beach will ferry birders back to Muddy Hollow. We will bird riparian woodlands, meadows, and coast, having lunch on trail. Plan for a full day's outing.

### San Francisco Birds at Merrie Way

**Sunday, March 26**

Harry Fuller, 415.344.2363, anzatowhee@yahoo.com

Meet at 8 a.m. at Merrie Way, the unpaved parking lot at west end of Pt. Lobos above Cliff House at Land's End. This will be our last chance to see wintering species in bright breeding plumage. Local Red-tailed Hawks should be on their nest. Many smaller birds will be setting up nesting territories. Surfbirds should be in breeding plumage prior to northward migration. Email leader for transit (Muni) info if needed.

### Mines Road

Livermore Area

**Saturday, April 22**

**Sign-up: after April 2**

FIELD TRIPS continued on page 11



November weather remained unseasonably warm and dry. Perhaps the balmy weather accounted for the slow birding. The month was noteworthy more for birds not seen than seen: no unusual pipits, no golden plovers and few other remarkable shorebirds, no particularly noteworthy gulls, and no longspurs reported anywhere in the region.

### LOONS TO DUCKS

The Crissy Field, SF, Red-necked Grebe continued working the waters around the Coast Guard Pier this month (MZ; PS). Elsewhere, a Red-necked Grebe returned to Rodeo Lagoon, MRN, for another year (WL, TH; EV) and Grebes were sighted off S. SF and Pigeon Pt., SM (RTh). No pelagic trips went out this month but seawatches from Pigeon Pt., SM, on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> yielded 527 Northern Fulmar, a Pink-footed Shearwater, and a Short-tailed Shearwater (RTh).

The Inverness Park, MRN, Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) remained in the company of the Black-crowned Night-Herons behind the store (mob). Despite their size, the Night-Herons

were sometimes challenging to locate on their concealed roosts. Around the Bay, observers noted 10+ Greater white-fronted Geese, several Snow and Ross's Geese, 60+ Cackling Geese of various races, and several Brants. Beginning the 16<sup>th</sup>, the Green-winged Teal flock behind the Nob Hill Market in Redwood Shores, SM, included a Eurasian x American hybrid (RTh). By the 24<sup>th</sup>, a pure Eurasian bird joined the flock (RTh). Seaside, a Long-tailed Duck was spied on the 11<sup>th</sup> in the waters off the Pillar Pt. jetty, SM (GD, ND). A Long-tailed was tentatively ID'd at great distance near Mile Rock Lighthouse, SF, on the 12<sup>th</sup> (NW). Bayside, a Long-tailed Duck was observed swimming near the SM Bridge, SM, Nov. 17-19 (RTh; EDB) and 2 more were noted near Pigeon Pt., SM, on the 26<sup>th</sup> (RTh).

### RAPTORS TO ALCIDS

Ten Ferruginous Hawk sightings were concentrated in the Livermore Valley and surrounding hills (ALA/CC); Coyote Valley (SCL); and Hawk Hill, MRN. On the 4<sup>th</sup>, Hawk Hill monitors watched a Rough-Legged Hawk fly over Alcatraz and Treasure Is., SF (SB). On the 8<sup>th</sup>, a Rough-legged

Hawk was reported from Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN (RS). Five Prairie Falcons visited the region this month: Nov. 1 at Calero Res., SCL (AV); 2 birds on Nov. 12 at Robinson Rd., SOL (RL, UW); Nov. 16 at CCFS, SCL (RC); and Nov. 19–20 at Brushy Peak Regional Preserve in Livermore, ALA (DB, PB; RC). By the 12<sup>th</sup>, the Mountain Plover flock in southern SOL, first reported on Oct. 12, had moved to its typical wintering grounds along Robinson Rd. (RL, UW). The only Pectoral Sandpiper this month was a juvenile plumaged reported at Martinez RS, CC, on the 7<sup>th</sup> (DD).

Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers were regularly recorded at Pigeon Pt. seawatches and a subadult Pomarine came into the bay as far south as Oyster Pt., in S. SF, SM, on the 20<sup>th</sup> (RTh). The Nov. 26 Pigeon Pt. seawatch also produced 2 Black-legged Kittiwakes (RTh). Six Elegant Terns remained in Sausalito, MRN, through the 4<sup>th</sup> (RS) and single Elegants showed up at Redwood Shores, SM, on the 8<sup>th</sup> (RTh) and offshore at the Presidio, SF, on the 18<sup>th</sup> (HF, MB). As many as 9 Black Skimmers remained all month at their preferred roost near Radio Rd. in Redwood Shores, SM, provoking speculation that they may overwinter this year (RTh; KO, DW, BB).

### DOVES TO THRASHERS

On the 19<sup>th</sup>, visitors to the newly opened Brushy Peak Regional Preserve in Livermore, ALA, reported a tremolo song coming from a eucalyptus grove that they identified as a Lesser Nighthawk (DB, PB). At Hayward RS, ALA, 2 Common Nighthawks were seen flying south over Mt. Trashmore on the 7<sup>th</sup> (BR). A Nov. 20 visit to the Santa Cruz Mountains to check known Common Poorwill breeding sites located 3 Poorwills responding to taped calls in the vicinity of Loma Prieta peak, SCL (DS). Through the 21<sup>st</sup>, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker made sporadic appearances in GGP, SF, near the 7th Ave. entrance (JC; BF, AW, KR). On Nov. 18, an Eastern Phoebe was a one-day wonder at Oka Ponds, SCL (PD, JP). A couple Tropical Kingbirds remained through Nov.



Black Skimmer

U S Fish & Wildlife Service







# BACKYARD BIRDER

MEG PAULETICH

**N**ow that we are in the midst of a California winter, we can expect almost any type of weather and, no doubt, will complain if it is too warm, too wet, too windy, or too cold. We who have the best of weather worlds are whiners . . . just because the weather isn't always perfect!

Many birds, however, have discovered that they can stay the winter in the Bay Area partly because, as a rule, the weather is not severe and maybe because so many of us feed birds and keep the weak ones from starving. When I first began birding 40 years ago, Dark-eyed (Oregon) Juncos went north to breed in the summertime. Now they're here year-round and have become one of the most common birds across the United States.

Allen's Hummingbirds migrate through here in spring and fall, while Anna's are year-long residents. It amazes me that they choose to have their first brood in January or February when winter storms can strike. I don't feed hummers when there is plenty of natural food, but in winter they need a helping hand. If you feed them, here are some suggestions for their good health. A small feeder is better in my opinion because you will change the food frequently as the birds consume it, ensuring its freshness. Mix one part sugar (never honey) with four parts water and bring to a boil. Let the solution cool and fill the feeder. There is no need to add artificial color.

Using up energy as fast as they sip nectar or sugar water, these dynamos will find your feeder in jiffy time. Between sips of your sugar water, these tiny jewels perch nearby while they digest the food and guard "their" feeder, as they are very territorial. Hummingbirds also get energy from tiny insects present during the winter, as do other small birds such as kinglets, creepers, and chickadees. When dusk arrives, hummers settle into a protected shrub or tree and enter a state of torpor, dropping their body temperatures so they use very little of their stored energy. As the sun rises, they warm up and begin their search for food all over again, feeding almost constantly all day.

Winter bird-watching is just as interesting as witnessing spring and fall migrations. The advantage of better viewing without foliage hiding the birds is an added bonus. Woodpeckers are especially satisfying to observe as they hammer away at suet cakes or peanuts. Being among the less nervous avian subjects, they tend to stay in one place for a while. Thistle brings

Waxwings are very popular among birders, for good reason. You might hear their high, wispy whistles before you spy them. They appear as sleek as porcelain figurines, their subtle tones contrasting with their black masks, yellow bellies, tail markings, and waxy red-orange wing tips. What beauties they are! Waxwings are primary distributors of seeds from all kinds of trees



*Dark-eyed junco.*

in the Lesser and American Goldfinches. They are also cooperative birds that literally hang around for long periods of time. Don't worry that feeding birds will prevent them from migrating. Birds respond to shrinking hours of daylight, which brings about hormonal changes that cause them to migrate.

If you are lucky to have berry-producing plants such as pyracantha, Toyon, or hawthorns, you will be treated to flocks of robins and other thrushes such as the Hermit Thrush, along with the sleek Cedar Waxwings. The ripening time for the berries varies greatly. Only the bird tasters know when berries have ripened into a perfect brew.

and shrubs. Over time, many stands of woods owe their existence to these birds. The only time these frugivores vary their diets is in late spring and summer when berry stocks are low. Then they delicately pluck tree blossoms, eating them whole or tearing them in half and consuming them along with any attending insects. In late winter, large flocks perch in treetops just as the sun sets, warming themselves before dark.

Don't forget that the occasional winter storm brings gifts of unusual bird sightings. Between squalls, bundle up and visit one of many birding sites along the bay for unexpected treats. Enjoy winter birding—regardless of the weather.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service





## Wednesday at Arrowhead Marsh

1000063

Wednesday, February 15

Courtenay Peddle, 510.532.8911 (no calls before 9 a.m.), capeddle@there.net

Meet at Arrowhead Marsh parking lot at 9:30 a.m. to study and enjoy wintering birds. Up to 14 species of ducks, and always the possibility of seeing Clapper Rails. Bring scope if you have one. For directions, see January 6 trip.

## Eastshore State Park Berkeley

Saturday, February 18

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
davequady@att.net

Explore a portion of the Berkeley waterfront and Eastshore State Park. Meet at 8 a.m. in parking lot at foot of University Ave., at corner closest to Skates restaurant. From there we will walk to various spots and bird until about noon, looking for shorebirds, waterbirds, and maybe land birds, too. Bring a scope if you have one. Heavy rain cancels.

## Cache Creek Nature Preserve

Yolo County

Saturday, February 18

Bob Power, 510.482.9601,  
rcpower@sbcglobal.net

Come visit Cache Creek Conservancy, a pristine stretch of riparian woodland and wetlands. For details and directions, see *December Gull*.

## Coyote Hills Regional Park

7000000

Saturday, February 25

Anne Hoff, 510.845-5908,  
Anne2210b@sbcglobal.net

Meet at 9 a.m. at visitor center parking lot for this half-day trip. We will bird varied habitats of this jewel of a park, looking for wintering waterfowl, waders, and songbirds. We may also have a nice assortment of raptors. Bring liquids. Heavy rain cancels.

From East Bay, take I-880 south to 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Turn right and continue west. Exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and continue north for 1 mile, then turn left on Patterson Ranch Rd. to park. \$

## Yosemite National Park

Friday–Sunday, June 2–4

Trip sign-up: after February 26

Dave Quady, 510.704.9353,  
davequady@att.net; Bob Lewis

Trip is limited to first 20 participants who sign up. The park's lower and middle elevations are alive with singing birds and have a variety of habitats that support a rich diversity of bird life. Detailed information will be provided to those confirmed on the trip. Carpooling is encouraged. Be prepared to walk about 3 miles each day.

The California Environmental Quality Act requires the EBPRD to assess wildlife use and to consider potential wildlife impacts for a project of this scope. But the EBPRD has failed to do either of these things and has refused to complete an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the law.

by **Samantha Murray**, Conservation Director

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Golden Gate Audubon strongly endorses the enjoyment of the outdoors, but not at the expense of wildlife and habitat. Please write the EBRPD board member representing your area, stating that you value the wildlife and habitat of the Caldecott Wildlife Corridor and want to see Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve managed for the protection of these natural resources. Also note that you do not support a dramatic increase in recreation infrastructure and that, prior to any recreation expansion, an EIR must be completed, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. To find your board member or to email your member, go to [www.ebparks.org/district/board](http://www.ebparks.org/district/board). Letters should be sent to the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors, PO Box 5381, Oakland, CA 94605. For more information, contact Samantha Murray at [smurray@goldengateaudubon.org](mailto:smurray@goldengateaudubon.org) or 510.843.6551.

### GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY

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